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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Fifteenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 307th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 1 February 1996 at 4 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. CORTI

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WAYS AND MEANS OF EXPEDITING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

WAYS AND MEANS OF EXPEDITING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE (continued)

Report of Working Group 1 (CEDAW/C/1996/WG.1/WP.1 and CEDAW/C/1996/WG.1/WP.2 and Add.1)

1. Ms. BERNARD, speaking as Chairperson of Working Group 1, introduced the first part of the latter's report (CEDAW/C/1996/WG.1/WP.1) and drew attention to the proposal contained in paragraph 2 to insert an additional paragraph in the Committee's guidelines regarding the form and content of initial and subsequent reports of States parties. Paragraph 7 (d) had been deleted.

2. Ms. KHAN said that it was inappropriate that the alternate Western European member of the pre-session working group for the sixteenth session should be Ms. Bustelo Garcia del Real.

3. Ms. BERNARD said that Ms. Bustelo Garcia del Real had been the only expert available to fill that position. In order to forestall a discussion on the matter, however, it might be better to delete any reference to an alternate member for the Western European group.

4. Ms. ABAKA said that the report should emphasize the importance of the cooperation and assistance which members should receive from the Centre for Human Rights and its New York Office. Such support had not always been forthcoming in the past.

5. With regard to paragraph 12, she would welcome an explanation of why it was necessary for the Chairperson to attend the meetings of both the Commission on Human Rights and of the chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies.

6. The CHAIRPERSON said that the agendas of the meetings of the two bodies were quite different. The purpose of the meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies was simply to exchange views and experiences, mainly with a view to enhancing the status of such bodies within the United Nations system. The Commission on Human Rights, on the other hand, was the most important forum within the United Nations system for the discussion of human rights and an entire week of its session was devoted to a consideration of the human rights of women. The Commission received the reports of the various special rapporteurs on human rights situations, including the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

7. Ms. GARCIA-PRINCE, referring to part 4 of the report, suggested that the Committee should include in the agenda of its sixteenth session an item concerning the procedure to be followed when the Committee knew that a State party would not be sending representatives to introduce its periodic report at a given session. It would be better if such reports were not included in the Committee's agenda.

8. CEDAW/C/1996/WG.1/WP.1, as orally amended, was adopted.

CEDAW/C/1996/WG.1/WP.2 and Add.1

Decision 1

9. Ms. JAVATE DE DIOS said that a specific number should be substituted for the word "backlog" in paragraph 3 in order to underscore the magnitude of the backlog of States parties' reports awaiting review.

10. Following a discussion in which the CHAIRPERSON, Ms. SINEGIORGIS and Ms. TALLAWY took part, Ms. BERNARD proposed that the word "increasing" should be inserted before "backlog" in paragraph 3.

11. Decision 1, as orally amended, was adopted.

Decision 2

12. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that she supported the decision, on the understanding that the language employed in the last sentence to describe the consensus reached at the Fourth World Conference on Women was the same as that used in paragraph 230 (k) of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

13. Ms. BERNARD assured the Committee that the language was the same.

14. Decision 2 was adopted.

Decision 3

15. Decision 3 was adopted.

Decision 4

16. Ms. TALLAWY said that the expression "constructive dialogue" in the first sentence of the decision was inappropriate and should be replaced by the words "detailed summary of the discussions".

17. Decision 4, as orally amended, was adopted.

Decision 5

18. After a discussion in which Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING, Ms. TIMOTHY and Ms. SINEGIORGIS took part, Ms. BERNARD suggested that decision 5 should be deleted, since it had been decided elsewhere in the report that the Secretariat would be requested to prepare an analysis of the question of reservations to the Convention.

19. It was so decided.

Decision 6

20. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that structural adjustment programmes should be included under priority area 2 and, under priority area 7, disabled women should

be listed before elderly women. Whatever agency or programme addressed the needs of minority women should also be included somewhere in the list.

21. Ms. OUEDRAOGO suggested that a ninth priority area should be added for rural women, in conjunction with FAO.

22. Ms. GARCIA-PRINCE said that, under priority area 2, UNDP, which called itself the anti-poverty agency, should be listed first. With regard to priority area 6, UNICEF had developed an entire methodology for women's empowerment, and should be included, along with UNIFEM.

23. Ms. ABAKA suggested that IMF should be added to priority area 2.

24. Ms. BARE suggested that UNFPA should be included under priority area 4.

25. Ms. KHAN said that the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was directly involved in many of the priority areas and should be listed also, either under priority area 2 or in connection with rural women.

26. Ms. JAVATE DE DIOS said that migration and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), an intergovernmental body, should be added to priority area 5. She suggested the addition of a tenth priority area dealing with refugee and indigenous women.

27. Mr. TALLAWY said that, although the list could not be exhaustive, since it was intended to identify the priorities for future work of the Committee in its follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, she agreed that rural women and refugee and indigenous women should be included.

28. Ms. AOUIJ said that UNICEF had done a great deal of work in the area of protection of the girl child and, should therefore be added under priority area 3.

29. Decision 6, as orally amended, was adopted.

Suggestion 1

30. Suggestion 1 was adopted.

Suggestion 2

31. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that since neither part of the suggestion appeared to be financially or technically feasible she would not support it.

32. Ms. TIMOTHY (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that if suggestion 2 were adopted, it must be without financial implications.

33. Ms. TALLAWY, speaking with reference to paragraph 2, said that finance could be sought for at least one participant. She suggested that the Committee should address itself directly to the Commission on the Status of Women since the Secretariat had made it clear that it could not itself invite others to participate in the Commission's work.

34. Ms. CARTWRIGHT suggested the following changes to the paragraphs: paragraph 1 should read "that the Commission on the Status of Women consider inviting two experts of CEDAW to participate as resource persons ..."; paragraph 2: the word "Chairperson" should be inserted in the fifth line after the word "Committee" and the rest of the sentence should be deleted.

35. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that if the second paragraph was amended as suggested, she would be able to accept it.

36. Suggestion 2, as orally amended, was adopted.

Suggestion 3

37. Ms. BERNARD pointed out that the suggestion was intended to address the Secretariat's concern with regard to outstanding reports by encouraging States parties which had not already done so to submit a report.

38. Ms. TIMOTHY (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that she understood the Committee wished to add the sentence "The Committee reiterates its earlier proposal that whenever possible States parties should submit combined reports when more than one report is overdue."

39. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that she supported the text read out by Ms. Timothy, and that the Secretariat was responsible for ensuring States parties submitted their reports.

40. Ms. TALLAWY said that legal advice should be sought with regard to the combining of reports.

41. Suggestion 3, as orally amended, was adopted.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.